FY 2004 Budget Highlights

NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), also known as "NOAA Research," requests $380.6 million (M) in FY'04, reflecting a net decrease of $11.6M under the FY'03 enacted appropriations. This will support the enhanced operations of the NOAA programs.

FY 2004 Program Increases

Climate Change Research Initiative: NOAA requests an increase of $16.9M and 8 FTE in the Climate Observations and Services line item and the OAR Procurement, Acquisitions, and Construction (PAC) account to work towards the goals of the Climate Change Research Initiative (CCRI). The research will be conducted in the following areas:

Carbon Cycle Atmospheric Measurements: $5.0M increase to support the implementation of a Carbon Cycle Atmospheric Observing System that focuses on North America. This will improve the understanding of climate change and contribute to the scientific basis for effective management of carbon dioxide.

Global Ocean Observing System: $6.3M increase to continue building a global ocean observing system that accurately documents climate-scale changes in ocean heat, carbon, and sea level. The request will permit NOAA to increase our understanding of oceanic processes through monitoring and research, to enhance our predictive capabilities, and allow us to provide sound scientific advice to those charged with managing the Nation's oceanic and atmospheric resources. It will extend and strengthen NOAA's existing ocean observation efforts across the entire ocean observing system.

Reducing Uncertainties: $1M increase to support research that will yield improved decision-support tools associated with a key element of climate-change scenarios. This research will focus on a better understanding of the absorption and scattering of radiation by aerosols (fine airborne particles) and the associated heating and cooling roles in the climate system.

Climate Change Science Program Office: $1.1M increase to support the initiation of an interagency Climate Change Science Program Office. The CCSP Office will coordinate research planned and implemented across the departments and agencies to support agreed-upon scientific objectives, and to provide usable, science-based products as tools for policy and management.

CCRI Supercomputing: $3.5M increase in the Procurement, Acquisitions, and Construction account, to: (1) enhance NOAA's Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory's computing capability by 1/3 to enable the running of climate model simulations relevant to policy and business issues and (2) turn NOAA's investments in the Climate Change Research Initiative (CCRI) and previous research into policy relevant knowledge.

Improved Weather Forecast Accuracy Through THORPEX: An increase of $2.5M is requested for NOAA's U.S. Weather Research Program (USWRP), including the NOAA-wide High Impact Weather initiative. $1.3M will support The Observing System Research and Predictability Experiment (THORPEX), an emerging component of the USWRP that will significantly improve weather forecast accuracy.

High Impact Weather: $1.2M will enhance the electrical load forecasting component of the agency-wide Energy Initiative. The Energy Initiative, designed to improve electrical load forecasting and energy operations management, will increase to a total of $7.3M. The initiative is managed by the U.S. Weather Research Program (USWRP).

Invasive Species/Ballast Water Technology: NOAA requests an increase of $1.0M to: (1) develop technologies for the treatment of ships' ballast water to reduce the potential for invasions of non-indigenous marine species; (2) set up a national monitoring system for aquatic nuisance species focusing on marine protected areas and areas vulnerable to invasion such as ports and harbors; and (3) test control mechanisms and restore native species and habitat conditions in invaded ecosystems.

National Sea Grant College Program: NOAA requests $57.4M to support the recently enacted National Sea Grant College Program Act Amendments of 2002 (HR 3389), which reauthorized the Sea Grant program as part of the Department of Commerce.

Adjustments to Base / Base Restorations: NOAA requests $19.1M in base restorations to: (1) cover adjustments not enacted in FY'03 for increased costs of pay, benefits, and other expenses; (2) to restore unrequested base cuts made in FY'03; and, (3) to fund critical program increase requests not enacted in FY'03. These activities provide sustained, quality-controlled measurements vital to NOAA's research and core NOAA services. For example, the request would cover funding for phased-array radar systems used in forecasting and detecting tornadoes and other forms of severe weather, and to disseminate this information to emergency managers, the media, and the general public for appropriate action. Funding would also be used to restore the Space Environment Center's (SEC) capability to characterize and forecast conditions in the space environment, which has potentially critical impacts in a range of sectors. Funding would also be used to restore the NOAA Marine Aquaculture Program, which works to develop and ensure environmentally sustainable technologies for marine aquaculture. The program is funding competitive projects in exciting new areas such as submerged offshore aquaculture, marine polyculture, and balanced ecosystem approaches that are essential for the development of modern aquaculture.

FY 2004 Program Decreases

NOAA Profiler Network: The Administration proposes to deactivate the network, consisting of 32 profilers in the Central US and a central command and processing center in Colorado, for a savings of $4.15 million per year. Three profilers in Alaska could continue to operate, but their data would no longer flow through the current processing center and on to the NWS and other customers. In the national context of budget requirements for such major priorities as homeland security and the overall limited funding available for other purposes, the Administration realizes that it must propose some reductions in current activities to support the Nation's highest priorities.

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